

NOAA Chesapeake Bay Interpretive Buoy System Annapolis Buoy: Summer Seasonal

Water conditions at the NOAA Annapolis CBIBS buoy reflect the rainfall not only in the Severn River's short watershed upstream of Annapolis but also in the Susquehanna's gigantic drainage basin in central Pennsylvania and south-central New York. Rainfall in the Susquehanna's watershed wrestles with salty water from the Atlantic, so salinities here can vary widely through the year, with the highest values usually coming in late summer.

If you'd like to see graphic representations of these water quality features at the Annapolis buoy over time, and the way they affect each other, you can visit www.buoybay.noaa.gov and create your own graphs. This is a great feature for anyone who wants to understand how the Bay and its rivers "work."

As summer settles into the waters around Annapolis, young white perch, rockfish, croakers, spot, menhaden, silversides, and bay anchovies spread out around the channel edges in this area and especially on nearby oyster reefs like Hacketts Bar and Tolly Point. Some will become food for larger adult fish, especially rockfish and white perch. Fast-swimming bluefish and even a few Spanish mackerel are already chasing anchovies and "peanut" (or baby) menhaden in the open waters outside the buoy.

Meanwhile, the little fish also have to avoid predators from above, especially terns, laughing gulls, and herring gulls, and from ospreys, great blue herons, and fast-swimming furry fishermen like river otters that chase them in the shallows to the west and the east. Somehow, though, even with all of these predators, the nursery waters around the mouth of the Severn River should produce enough juvenile fish this summer to help swell the stock of each species over the fall and winter.